

VZCZCXRO2158  
OO RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHNP RUEHPW RUEHROV RUEHSL RUEHSR  
DE RUEHRL #0069/01 0191948  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 191948Z JAN 10  
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6305  
INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAHINGEN GE PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/HQ USAFE RAMSTEIN AB GE PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/CDRUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BERLIN 000069

SIPDIS

STATE FOR S/SRAP, EUR/RPM AND EUR/CE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/17/2020

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [NATO](#) [GM](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: CHANCELLOR EMPHASIZES NEED FOR BROAD POLITICAL  
SUPPORT FOR TROOP INCREASE IN AFGHANISTAN

REF: A. BERLIN 0042

[B. BERLIN 0022](#)

[C. 09 BERLIN 1622](#)

[D. 09 BERLIN 1561](#)

Classified By: POLITICAL MINISTER COUNSELOR GEORGE GLASS. REASONS: 1.4  
(B) AND (D).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: The internal German debate regarding a possible increase in German troops in Afghanistan after the January 28 London Conference is back on a positive trajectory now that government concerns about the planned inflow of U.S. forces into the north have been largely dispelled. Defense Minister zu Guttenberg is still supportive of an increase of 1,500 in the troop ceiling (up from the current 4,500), but Chancellery sources believe that a 1,000-troop increase is the more likely outcome in the end, given the political desire to maximize opposition support for any new Bundeswehr mandate. Another complicating factor is the continued skepticism of Chancellor Merkel's coalition partners -- particularly FM Westerwelle and the Christian Social Union (CSU) -- toward a troop increase. The Social Democrats have ruled out additional "combat" troops, but have signaled a willingness to go along with sending more soldiers dedicated to training and force protection. While keen to capitalize on this opening, the government also strongly supports COMISAF's "partnering" concept and will therefore resist restrictions on the ability of German "trainers" to accompany ANA units on operations. The government is also looking at possible political deals to bring the SPD along with a troop increase, including a commitment to end Germany's participation in OEF. Meanwhile, the MOD is examining other ways of increasing its capacity to deploy ground troops in Afghanistan, apart from an increase in the troop ceiling, including withdrawing its Tornado reconnaissance aircraft. The next week will be important on the question of additional German troops, with President Karzai visiting Berlin on January 26 and the Chancellor making a statement to the Bundestag on January 27 to preview the London Conference.  
END SUMMARY.

FOCUS ON TROOP INCREASE OF 1,000 TO 1,500

[1](#)2. (C) Chancellery Military Affairs Officer LTC Martin Krueger confirmed that the internal debate on a possible troop increase was currently focused on the range of 1,000 to 1,500, but he thought the lower figure was more likely at this point. He emphasized the Chancellor's strong desire to obtain as much support as possible from the opposition parties for the troop increase so that it was not just a "government" decision, but rather a truly "national"

decision. Social Democratic Party (SPD) leaders have emphasized their opposition to sending more "combat" troops to Afghanistan, but have also signaled their willingness to countenance the deployment of additional troops for other tasks, such as training and force protection. Krueger said the Chancellery was hopeful that it could get a respectable number of SPD and other opposition parliamentarians to support an increase in the troop ceiling on the understanding that the bulk of the additional troops would be dedicated to accelerating the training of the Afghan National Security Forces and not focused on combat per se. Krueger said another option for building a "bridge" to the opposition was offering to end German participation in OEF when the current one-year parliamentary mandate comes up for a mid-term review this summer.

#### SUPPORT FOR COMISAF "PARTNERING" CONCEPT

13. (C) Our working level contacts express strong support for COMISAF's "partnering" concept and agree that it is important that additional German "trainers" have the ability to accompany Afghan National Security Forces on operations. German AF/PAK Special Representative Muetzelburg told Ambassador Murphy on January 14 that within the German government, Defense Minister zu Guttenberg is arguing strongly in favor of Germany carrying out "robust" partnering with Afghan forces. Muetzelburg claimed that the MFA supported zu Guttenberg's efforts, believing that in fact, this offered the best prospects for achieving in the shortest possible time the conditions for beginning the handover of responsibility to the Afghans.

BERLIN 00000069 002 OF 002

14. (C) MFA AF/PAK Task Force Director Ruediger Koenig confirmed MFA support for robust partnering, but acknowledged that in order to bring the SPD and other opposition parties on board with a troop increase in a revised ISAF mandate, the "combat" element of partnering would clearly have to be soft-pedaled. The head of the Afghanistan team within the MOD Joint Commitments Staff, COL Harald Gante, dismissed the possibility that in seeking to bring the SPD on board, the government could agree to restrictions that would prevent German "trainers" from accompanying their Afghan charges on operations. "That would make no sense," Gante told us flatly. "If that happens, those troops can be sent home immediately." The government is also looking for ways to restructure its current forces in Afghanistan to create additional capacity for the deployment of ground troops -- first and foremost, by withdrawing the six German Tornado reconnaissance aircraft based in northern Afghanistan, which would free up 800 personnel.

#### DIGESTING THE PLANNED U.S. INFLOW OF FORCES INTO THE NORTH

15. (C) Information about the planned U.S. troop deployment in the north of Afghanistan has finally made its way to Berlin through military channels, which is helping to dispel some of the concerns raised when this news was first leaked (ref B). The Germans understand that a total of some 5,000 U.S. troops will be sent to the north over the next six months, including a brigade combat team (BCT) from the 10th Mountain Division that will concentrate on the training of the Afghan National Police (ANP) and Afghan Border Police (ABP) as well as aviation task force that will provide much-needed rotary wing support. The confirmation that the 10th Mountain Division will focus on the training of the ANP and ABP, thereby leaving the German forces primarily responsible for the training of the Afghan National Army (ANA) -- which the Germans feel they have well in hand -- has allayed a lot of fears about a U.S. "take-over" of German operations in the north. It has also allowed the German MOD to explain with much greater credibility exactly how its plans for a troop increase will compliment what the U.S. is planning to do.

COMMENT

16. (C) While an increase of 2,500 is no longer in the current script, there seems to be a growing recognition within most parts of the government that Germany must increase its troop levels at least a moderate amount (1,000 to 1,500) in order to give substance to its rhetoric about supporting an acceleration of the training of the Afghan National Security Forces and the turnover of responsibility to the Afghan government. However, a troop increase is not yet in the bag.

FM Westerwelle and other FDP members are still wild cards -- many of them remain skeptical and could seize on the possible withdrawal of the Tornados or on Dutch plans to send troops to the north after leaving Uruzgan to argue that simple restructuring of the current Bundeswehr presence can meet the need for additional ground forces. Even with the FDP on board, it remains to be seen how many SPD parliamentarians can be won over to support a troop increase. With an eye toward the May state election in North Rhineland Westfalia, which the CDU/FDP must win in order to maintain its Bundesrat majority, and with polls that show the Afghanistan deployment as unpopular as ever, Chancellor Merkel will be extremely wary about requesting any troop increase that does not have the support of a respectable number of opposition politicians from the SPD and Greens.

MURPHY